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BETA VERSION FOR TESTING & FEEDBACK

Developing a relationship support pathway for families

A support pathway model

October 2021

This tool is designed to help you to develop a relationship support pathway for families in your local area, with the goal of reducing the impact of harmful conflict between parents on children.

The starting point for a support pathway is a map of existing services across the continuum of needs in the local area [↗](#).

These services are then set in the context of RPC, referring to the needs assessment to determine whose needs are to be met and at what level of support [↗](#).

Ultimately, this is about commissioning services and interventions that fit together to create a pathway of support that will comprehensively prevent and address parental conflict and the impact it has on children in your area. Provision should be available at all levels of need: universal, targeted selected and targeted indicated, and should include both services and interventions, working face-to-face or online.

Movement between levels of support is fluid. Some families will respond to a targeted intervention and may then only need universal services and light-touch support, such as a supportive conversation with a health visitor or a school teacher, or signposting to online self-help resources. Other families will go on to have a more persistent need for support, requiring specialist services, such as an intensive intervention on parental conflict and parenting or psychological therapy from a local mental health service. These families may also still need universal services, such as regular contact and monitoring from their GP.

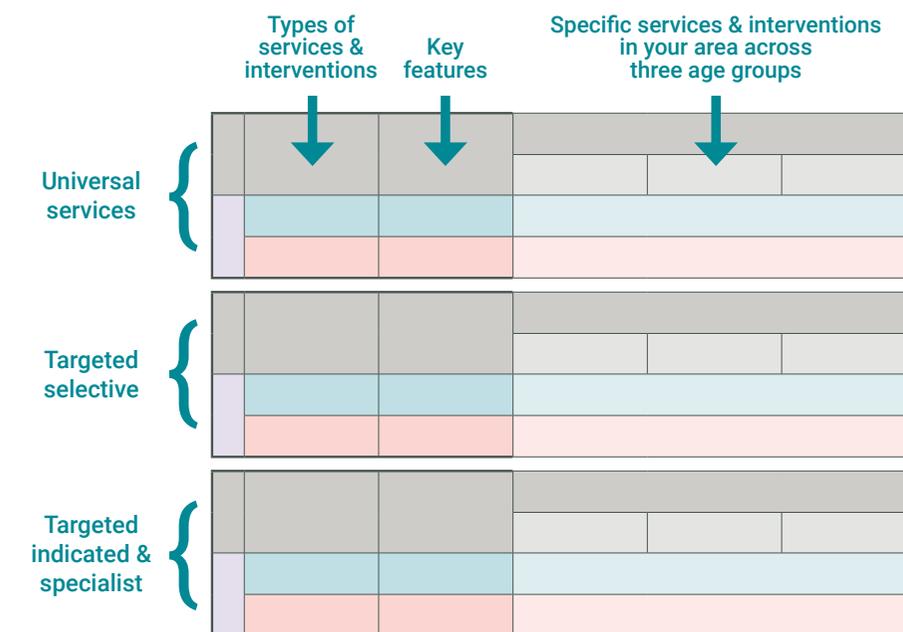
The three tables on the following pages set out a reducing parental conflict (RPC) support pathway for a local area, based on a typical structure. This model includes:

- local services across the continuum of needs in the local area
- interventions for intact or separated couples that have been formally assessed by EIF and included in the EIF Guidebook [↗](#)
- online RPC interventions which have demonstrated preliminary evidence of improving child or parent/interparental outcomes, and which recently underwent a light-touch assessment by EIF in our report on RPC support during the Covid pandemic [↗](#).

A support pathway may highlight interventions for particular target groups. One group commonly targeted by local areas is separated parents. Separation can happen at any time, including before a child's birth. In this tool, interventions aimed at separated parents are highlighted in gold.

Our exemplar also includes a 'Key features' column, designed to help you to identify the common features of evaluated RPC interventions so that they can be incorporated into interventions and services in your area. This recognises that some local areas will commission specific RPC programmes, while others will be maximising opportunities to incorporate evidence-based RPC messages and approaches into existing services or locally developed interventions.

Typical structure of a support pathway model



Beta version for testing & feedback

This beta version of our support pathway model tool will be tested and adapted through our work with local areas.

We would welcome any feedback on the content or structure of the tool – let us know what you think by emailing info@eif.org.uk

This support pathway model is available to download for free at: www.EIF.org.uk/resource/developing-a-relationship-support-pathway-for-families-a-support-pathway-model

		Examples of services and interventions		
Service / intervention type	Key features	Maternity & early years	Primary	Secondary
Universal support	Community services available to all families	Primary care and community health services such as midwifery, health visiting and school nursing		
		Police & community safety services		
		Early education services & schools		
		Housing, benefits & advice		
	These may be the first services parents struggling with relationship conflict turn to. Some of the key activities include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • build a trusted relationship with families • identify parental conflict • provide information and light touch advice • signpost to self-help resources or refer to targeted support. 	Family support services, including children's centres & family hubs		Sex and relationship education
Online relationship information, advice and support	Websites and webpages that offer self-help resources, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • self-help articles and blogs • short videos • support helplines. For more information, see our appendix on virtual and digital self-help resources.	Click Relationships : relationship support website that provides users with expert articles, a forum for the Click community to share questions and stories, a series of interactive activities, and an opportunity to receive private support from a Click listener.		
		See It Differently Campaign : a series of short videos that seek to help viewers understand new ways of managing conflict in order to change how things play out in the household.		
		Relationship Help Website : offers a range of online resources and support to help individuals with their relationships.		
		Gingerbread's Separation Hub : provides resources to parents that have recently separated.		
Universal parenting interventions which take account of conflict between parents	Parenting interventions that include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • group-based activities • skills training and psycho-education sessions • strengths-based sessions that motivate parents to use parenting practices • sessions to enhance parents' communication and conflict resolution skills. 	Family Foundations : 8 sessions of skills training and psycho-education over the perinatal period.	Schoolchildren & Their Families : 16 weeks of preventative group psycho-education sessions for parents of children making the transition to school.	
		e-Family Foundations (e-FF) : online version of the programme above.	Family Check-Up for Children Online : strengths-based intervention that motivates parents to use parenting practices to support child outcomes.	
Universal healthy relationship interventions	Relationship interventions that include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • activities for parents to undertake together or separately • sessions to enhance parents' communication and conflict resolution skills. 	ePREP (preliminary evidence of improved parental outcomes, no evidence of improved child outcomes): an online prevention and relationship education intervention.		
		OurRelationship (preliminary evidence of improved child outcomes): an online intervention involving activities that partners complete separately from one another through three phases: Observe, Understand, Respond.		
		Web-based marriage and relationship education (preliminary evidence of improved parental outcomes, no evidence of improved child outcomes): an online relationship education intervention for married couples.		
		Power of Two Online (preliminary evidence of improved parental outcomes, no evidence of improved child outcomes): an online relationship education intervention for married couples.		

FIND OUT MORE

	Service / intervention type	Key features	Examples of services and interventions		
			Maternity & early years	Primary	Secondary
Targeted selective support	Community services available to families at risk of parental conflict	<p>These services provide targeted support to families that may be at greater risk of experiencing risk factors and parental conflict. Some of the key activities include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • build a trusted relationship with families • identify parental conflict and promote conversations on healthy relationships • refer to targeted support. 	Specialist midwifery, community perinatal team	Child development centres	Targeted youth work
			Children's therapies: speech & language, occupational health & physiotherapy		
			Early help family support teams		
			Local authority front door services (including early help triage and multi-agency safeguarding hubs)		
				Specialist SEND services supporting schools & families, including SENCOs & educational psychologists	
				Specialist support staff located in schools & school family services	
				Pupil referral units and alternative provision academies	
	Targeted selective parenting interventions which take account of conflict between parents	<p>These parenting interventions provide support to parents who may be at greater risk of experiencing risk factors and parental conflict. These interventions include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sessions on parenting practices and family management skills • activities to practice skills that can mediate parents' stress and child behavioural difficulties • interventions targeting separating or separated parents include: • activities to mitigate adverse outcomes from divorce and separation on parents and their children • sessions and training to improve the co-parenting relationship • stress and anger management skills to reduce children's exposure to interparental conflict • group discussions, role plays and assignments of home practice. 	<p>Enhanced Triple P : 3–11 sessions on communication & co-parenting for families with parenting and mental health problems.</p>		<p>Partners in Parenting (PiP) (preliminary evidence of improved parental outcomes, no evidence of improved child outcomes) : an online intervention to decrease parental risk factors associated with adolescent depression and anxiety.</p>
<p>Family Check-up (FCU) for Children : a strengths-based, family-centred intervention that motivates parents to use parenting practices to support child outcomes.</p>			<p>4Rs2Ss : intervention targeted at families who have a child between 7 and 11 years old who are diagnosed with oppositional defiant disorder or conduct disorder.</p>		
<p>New Beginnings Programme for Divorced and Separating Families (NBP) : a parenting intervention for children between the ages of 3 and 18.</p>					
<p>Triple P Family Transitions : an intensive intervention programme for parents experiencing difficulties as a consequence of separation or divorce.</p>					
<p>Parents Plus Parenting when Separated : a parenting intervention for children between the ages of 0 and 18.</p>					
	<p>Parents Forever : a divorce education intervention for separated parents of children between the ages of 0 and 18.</p>		<p><i>EIF did not assess interventions targeting teenage parents, but there are some interventions available, including the Young Parenthood Program (YPP). We recommend verifying the evidence base of such interventions.</i></p>		
Targeted selective healthy relationship interventions	Relationship interventions for parents who may be at greater risk of experiencing risk factors and parental conflict.	<p><i>EIF did not assess targeted selective healthy relationship interventions, but there are some interventions available, such as Within My Reach. We recommend verifying the evidence base of such interventions.</i></p>			

	Service / intervention type	Key features	Examples of services and interventions		
			Maternity & early years	Primary	Secondary
Targeted indicated & specialist support	Community services available to families at risk of parental conflict	<p>These services provide targeted indicated support to a smaller group of families on the basis of specific, pre-identified issues. Some of the key activities include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • build a trusted relationship with families and provide specialist support • identify parental conflict and promote conversations on healthy relationships • refer to targeted support. 	<p>Adult mental health services</p> <hr/> <p>Child & young people's mental health services</p> <hr/> <p>Adult drug & alcohol services</p> <hr/> <p>Social care – safeguarding and disabled children's teams</p> <hr/> <p>Parental relationship breakdown services including contact centres, mediation, CAFCASS, private family law</p> <hr/> <p>Family group conferencing</p> <hr/> <p>Specialist adolescent services</p>		
	Targeted indicated parenting interventions which take account of conflict between parents	<p>These parenting interventions provide support to parents who may be at greater risk of experiencing risk factors and parental conflict. These interventions include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sessions on parenting practices and family management skills • discussion, home assignments, video vignettes, roleplay practices, and individual goal-setting • behavioural practice activities. 	<p>Incredible Years Preschool BASIC + ADVANCE Parent Training : intervention for parents with child behaviour problems (3–6 years) with a component on improving quality of parental relationships.</p>	<p>Incredible Years School Age BASIC + ADVANCE Parent Training : intervention for parents of children aged 6–12 with behaviour issues and disorders with additional sessions on parental relationships.</p>	
	Targeted indicated healthy relationship interventions	<p>Relationship interventions for parents who may be at greater risk of experiencing risk factors and parental conflict.</p>	<p><i>EIF did not assess targeted indicated healthy relationship interventions, but there are some interventions available, such as Integrative Behavioural Couple Therapy. We recommend verifying the evidence base of such interventions.</i></p>		